



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 3, 2007

FACT SHEET

MAYOR SANDERS STEPS UP POLLUTION PREVENTION EFFORT AIMED AT KEEPING MISSION BAY CLEAN AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

City's "Think Blue" Outreach Program Set to Contact Beach Goers, Boaters and RV Users All Summer

Mayor Sanders has taken another step in his pledge to increase public awareness and pollution prevention efforts at the City's shoreline. The Mayor today launched a new outreach and education program focused toward recreational users of Mission Bay. The new program is based on the City's successful "Think Blue" storm water pollution prevention campaign and will take pollution prevention messages directly to bay users during the summer months.

Beginning on July 4, "Think Blue" team members will be conducting outreach to recreational vehicle users, boaters, day visitors and tourists throughout East Mission Bay. The team will provide these groups with information about simple steps they can take to help the City prevent pollution advisories and beach closures.

The outreach effort will include a series of postcards, brochures, signs and banners offering helpful tips for bay users. These will include information about proper waste disposal procedures for RV users and methods for securely disposing trash and other materials with the potential for polluting the bay. When followed, the simple changes being recommended in the campaign can greatly assist in reducing beach closures, improving the cleanliness and health of beaches and ensuring that Mission Bay will remain open and available for City residents and tourists alike.

"All of us have a responsibility for keeping Mission Bay clean and healthy. We need to learn the proper waste disposal practices that will keep unwanted materials from entering the Bay. We also need to make sure that everyone is involved in the effort. This extension of the "Think Blue" campaign is a great way to get the message out."

Mayor Jerry Sanders

MULTIPLE DEPARTMENTS WILL DISTRIBUTE INFORMATION:

The new Mission Bay outreach and education campaign is being conducted as a collaborative effort between the “Think Blue” team in the City’s Storm Water Pollution Prevention Division, the Park and Recreation Department and City of San Diego Lifeguards, a division of the Fire and Rescue Services Department. Staff from each of these programs and departments will be distributing information materials to bay users throughout the summer.

The Mission Bay campaign will focus primarily on RV users and boaters using the septic disposal site near the Mission Bay Visitor Information Center. The City has chosen these groups for attention to help ensure that septic wastes are carefully controlled and kept away from any areas that might drain to the Bay. These types of wastes may have initiated the spike in beach closures around East Mission Bay in July last year.

The campaign will include:

- Large Billboard-sized posters visible at the entrance to Visitors Center and along Ski Beach offering tips boaters and RVers can use to keep beaches and waterways free from pollution
- Staff canvassing the area providing the information materials, tip cards and plastic garbage bags with additional information about helpful practices for controlling wastes.
- Information about other regional septic dump stations for RV users concerned about the delays that can take place at the Mission Beach dump station. This information will focus on reducing long lines at the bay’s dump station and will help to discourage illegal dumping which might cause beach closures.
- Mobile Billboards featuring “Think Blue” tips and messages will be on the street during low-traffic hours to increase visibility and the number of people exposed to the campaign.

BEACH CLOSURES DECREASING AS CITY’S FOCUSES ON WATER QUALITY ISSUES

Despite a spike in contamination readings that required closing beaches in east Mission Bay in July of last year, the City of San Diego has been able to decrease the number of beach closure postings in Mission Bay by nearly 80% since 2000. Last year’s closures are known to have been caused, in part, by inappropriate testing protocols leading to a number of falsely high bacteria counts in the area. There is also increasing data showing that bird wastes, not human wastes, may cause a great deal of the contamination readings found in Mission Bay.

Following last year’s closures, Mayor Sanders initiated one of the most comprehensive water quality investigations ever undertaken in the City. Under that initiative all City storm drains and other watersheds leading to east Mission Bay were inspected and cleaned as needed. Sewage systems used by leaseholders were inspected and the City’s own pump stations and piping systems were given inspections.

With the integrity of these systems confirmed, the Mayor directed City staff to expand pollution prevention efforts through the public information campaign launched today.